

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

January 24, 2018

António Guterres  
United Nations Secretary General  
405 East 42nd Street  
New York, NY 10017

Dear Secretary General Guterres,

We are deeply concerned over reports regarding the repatriation of Rohingya refugees and ask the United Nations and its member states to strongly oppose any repatriation plan that puts innocent civilians back in harm's way.

Beginning in late August, Burma's military and security services carried out the latest round of violent attacks against Rohingya civilians that led to what you and others have recognized as ethnic cleansing with over 650,000 people fleeing their homes. The attacks included the murder of men, women, and children; horrific gang-rapes; and the wholesale, systematic destruction of villages and livelihoods.

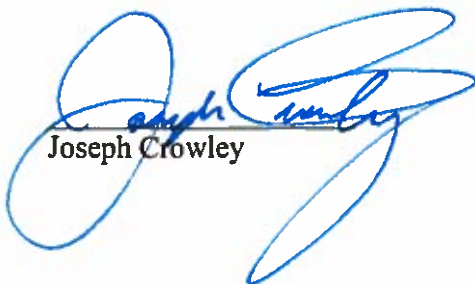
While the flow of refugees into Bangladesh has slowed since their peak in August and September, new refugees continue to arrive every week. Yet, there has not been meaningful action by Burma's authorities to acknowledge accountability for the attacks or address underlying issues such as equal rights, citizenship, freedom of movement, and return of lands – including those raised by former Secretary General Kofi Annan. Additionally, authorities in Burma have diminished transparency in Rakhine State by arresting journalists covering the Rohingya crisis and blocking access for both the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and Fact-Finding Mission.


It would be the height of cruelty to forcibly return those who have just fled some of the worst state-sponsored atrocities in the world. There is every reason to be concerned that Rohingya men, women, and children will face severe short and long-term danger if they are to return absent adequate safeguards.


Instead, all returns must be voluntary, safe, dignified, and in line with international standards. The involvement of international organizations as well as international observers on both sides of the border is essential, including the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR).

We appreciate your consideration of this matter and urge you to do everything you can to ensure that no one is subjected to further atrocities.

Sincerely,

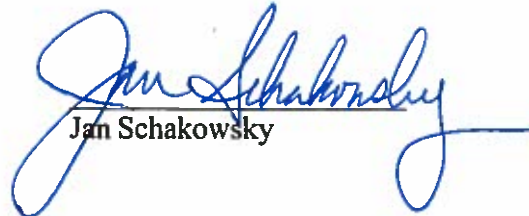
  
Joseph Crowley

  
Steve Chabot

  
Ann Wagner

  
Eliot L. Engel

  
Sander M. Levin

  
Jan Schakowsky

  
Barbara Comstock

  
Claudia Tenney

  
Ann McLane Kuster

  
Marcy Kaptur

  
James H. McGovern

  
Gerald E. Connolly

  
Gwen Moore

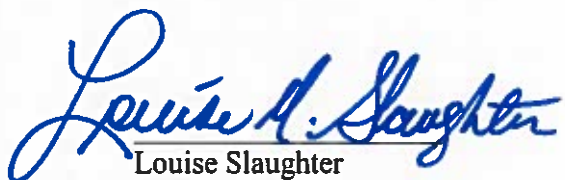
  
Chellie Pingree

  
Mark Pocan

  
David N. Cicilline

  
Steve Cohen

  
Thomas A. Garrett, Jr.

  
Louise Slaughter

  
Jackie Speier

  
David Price

CC    Ambassador Nikki R. Haley, United States Mission to the United Nations  
        Filippo Grandi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees  
        William Lacy Swing, Director General, International Organization for Migration  
        Ambassador Miroslav Lajčák, President, United Nations General Assembly  
        Ambassador U Hau Do Suan, Permanent Mission of Myanmar to the United Nations  
        Ambassador Masud Bin Momen, Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to the United Nations